

**Montana State House of Representatives  
Committee on Federal Relations, Energy, and Telecommunications  
Northern Plains Resource Council testimony in support of HB 227  
By: Connie Keogh**

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Connie Keogh (spell your name), and I am here today representing the members of the Northern Plains Resource Council, a grassroots conservation and family agriculture group. Northern Plains supports HB 227.

We stand to support this bill because we believe that it is about good government and transparency. House Bill 227 would make the energy usage data of state owned and leased buildings publicly available through an independent website. With this information, the state will be able to better identify which buildings have the potential for saving taxpayer money through energy savings measures, and it will allow the state to prioritize energy efficiency improvements for its buildings. Finally, it will provide an easy to access resource for legislators and the public to see where we can do better as a state in saving taxpayer money by reducing energy costs.

The state has already been taking aggressive measures to reduce our energy usage and save Montana taxpayers money. For example, the State Buildings Energy Conservation Program is an effort to reduce energy use and costs to state government. It saved the state of Montana \$1.8 million from 2009-2012 through 87 energy conservation projects in state buildings. These energy improvements created savings that exceeded their costs.

We feel that this bill makes that information more publically available and increases the accountability of state government to its citizens. Currently, the performances from the state's activities are not easily accessible for citizens to view, and they are often scattered across various reports and links within websites. This bill would bring all of that information into one place under one independent website. As I mentioned, we believe this will be an important tool for legislators and citizens alike to see where their state government is making progress on saving money, and it will allow us all to work together to improve the places where we are not being as successful.

Lastly, we support the amendment that the sponsor is bringing forward to clarify the impact of the bill on the Montana University System from the bill. While we think that it would be beneficial to include that information, we understand that it is not feasible at this time.

Again, this is about good government, and it is about transparency. We urge a yes vote on HB 227.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.